

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 18598 01 OF 02 240905Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4682

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 18598

LIMDIS

NESCO/AIDAC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UNESCO, PFOR, XF, EAID

SUBJECT: FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM PROPOSAL FOR
PALESTINIAN STUDENTS

1. INCLUDE AID/AA/NE IN DISTRIBUTION. US PERMDEL
HAS NOT REPEAT NOT DISTRIBUTED INFO COPIES.
DEPARTMENT MIGHT WANT CONSIDER DESIRABILITY OF REPEATING
INFO TO AMERICAN EMBASSIES SUCH AS AMMAN, BEIRUT,
CAIRO, DAMASCUS, JIDDA, KUWAIT AND TEL AVIV.

2. SUMMARY: (A) UNESCO SECRETARIAT HAS RECENTLY
RECEIVED PROPOSAL FROM PLO OBSERVER FOR UNESCO TO
MOUNT OR ARRANGE A SPECIAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FOR
PALESTINIAN STUDENTS FROM REFUGEE CAMPS IN LABANON,
JORDON, SYRIA, KUWAIT AND FROM THE OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES.

(B) PROPOSAL FOCUSES ON TWO PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH
CURRENT UNIVERSITY STUDIES OPEN TO PALESTINIAN
STUDENTS. FIRST PROBLEM IS SHORTAGE OF UNIVERSITY
LEVEL STUDENTS IN DEVELOPMENT RELATED FIELDS SUCH AS
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT, ETC.
SOME FIVE THOUSAND PALESTINIAN STUDENTS REPORTED
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PAGE 02 PARIS 18598 01 OF 02 240905Z

ENROLLED IN ARAB UNIVERSITIES IN REGION BUT ALMOST
ALL ARE IN FIELD OF CLASSIC ARABIC LITERATURE,
LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATION. CONCERN EXPRESSED FOR
RESULTING FUTURE SHORTAGE OF WELL TRAINED HIGH
LEVEL MANPOWER IN TECHNICAL FIELDS. SECOND PROBLEM
IS INSULAR NATURE OF STUDIES WITH ALMOST TOTAL
RELIANCE ON ARAB UNIVERSITIES AND CULTURE. PROPOSAL

WISHES BROADEN EXPOSURE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO
NON-ARAB EXPERIENCES AND SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT.

(C) PROPOSAL IS FOR TOTAL OF ONE HUNDRED UNDER-
GRADUATE, GRADUATE AND POST-GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS FOR
FIVE YEAR PERIOD. PLACES OF STUDY DESIRED IN ORDER
OF PRIORITY ARE NORTH AMERICA, UK, WEST EUROPE,
EASTERN EUROPE, AFRICA AND ASIA.

(D) UNESCO'S UNIT RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDS-IN-TRUST
ACTIVITIES IS EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES WITH SEVERAL
COUNTRIES OF THEIR PARTICIPATING IN PROGRAM.
ALTERNATIVES EXPLORED ARE THROUGH CONTRIBUTION TO
UNESCO FUNDS-IN-TRUST ACCOUNT FOR UNESCO ADMINISTRA-
TION OR THROUGH BILATERALLY ADMINISTERED FELLOWSHIPS
DIRECTLY TO PALESTINIAN STUDENTS. INFORMAL REQUEST
HAS BEEN MADE TO USPERMDEL TO SEE IF US COULD
PARTICIPATE SINCE PRIORITY PREFERENCE FOR STUDY
INCLUDE US AND IN FIELDS IN WHICH U.S. HAS SPECIAL
COMPETENCE.

(E) IT IS PERMDEL'S UNDERSTANDING FROM INITIAL
INFORMAL CONTACT FROM SECRETARIAT STAFF THAT PLO AS
ORGANIZATION WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED. IT WAS POINTED
OUT THAT SECRETARIAT COULD VISUALIZE VARIOUS FLEXIBLE
PROCEDURES RANGING FROM POTENTIAL DONORS GRANTING
FELLOWSHIPS DIRECTLY TO SELECTED STUDENTS TO
POSSIBILITY OF GRANTS TO UNESCO FOR IT TO ADMINISTER
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM. HOWEVER, ANY FURTHER CLARIFICA-
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PAGE 03 PARIS 18598 01 OF 02 240905Z

TION WOULD HAVE TO WAIT FURTHER EXPLORATION WITH
SECRETARIAT.

(F) US PERMDEL WOULD LIKE INFORMALLY TO EXPLORE
FURTHER WITH UNESCO SECRETARIAT TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION. WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SOUND OUT REACTION
OF WESTERN EUROPEAN FRIENDS. WOULD APPRECIATE
DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE FOR FURTHER INFORMAL TALKS WITH
SECRETARIAT. END SUMMARY.

3. FELLOWSHIP CANDIDATES WOULD BE SELECTED FROM
STUDENTS IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN LEBANON, JORDON, SYRIA
AND KUWAIT, WITH SOME POSSIBLY COMING FROM THE
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. PROPOSAL IS FOR SOME ONE
HUNDRED UNIVERSITY AND GRADUATE LEVEL FELLOWSHIPS
FOR AROUND FIVE YEARS EACH. PRIORITY FIELDS OF STUDY
INCLUDE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT
AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, HISTORY, NON-ARABIC
LANGUAGES, NON-ARABIC LITERATURE, AND LINGUISTICS.

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PAGE 01 PARIS 18598 02 OF 02 240907Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 18598

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PRIORITY REGIONS FOR STUDYING ARE NORTH AMERICA,
U.K., WEST EUROPE, EASTERN EUROPE, AFRICA AND ASIA.

4. RATIONALE FOR NEED OF SPECIAL FELLOWSHIP IS BASED
ON A SHORTAGE OF NUMBER OF HIGH LEVEL TRAINED
PALESTINIAN MANPOWER, ESPECIALLY IN SCIENTIFIC AND
DEVELOPMENT RELATED FIELDS. IT ALSO POINTED OUT THAT
THERE IS UNBALANCED CONTACT OF PALESTINIAN STUDENTS
WITH NON-ARAB INSTITUTES AND UNIVERSITIES.

5. IT POINTED OUT THAT SOME 5,000 PALESTINIAN
STUDENTS ARE ENROLLED EACH YEAR IN UNIVERSITIES IN
THE ARAB STATES OF THE REGION. HOWEVER, ALMOST
ALL ARE IN FIELDS OF CLASSIC ARABIC LITERATURE,
LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATION. ALMOST NO ONE ENROLLED
IN SCIENTIFIC OR TECHNOLOGIC DISCIPLINES. MENTION
ALSO MADE OF BEIR ZEIT COLLEGE WHICH SINCE 1974
OFFERS PALESTINIAN STUDENTS STUDIES LEADING TO A
UNIVERSITY DIPLOMA AS WELL AS BETHLEHEM UNIVERSITY
ESTABLISHED IN 1973. IT POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT
NEITHER INSTITUTION HAS YET RECEIVED ACCREDITATION
AND THAT THEIR TEACHING STAFFS ARE WEAK. MENTION
IS ALSO MADE OF SIX NORMAL SCHOOLS WHICH OFFER TWO
YEARS OF POST-HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES AND VARIOUS
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PAGE 02 PARIS 18598 02 OF 02 240907Z

VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS ON THE WEST BANK AND

THE GAZA STRIP. HOWEVER, IT POINTED OUT THAT THESE INSTITUTIONS HAVE LOW BUDGETS AND LIMITED CAPACITY FOR EXPANSION OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT.

6. ROUGH ESTIMATE WAS INCLUDED FOR EACH FELLOWSHIP OF \$12,000 PER YEAR. THIS WOULD CONSIST OF TUITION COSTS, ANNUAL ROUND-TRIP FROM UNIVERSITY TO HOME, LIVING ALLOWANCE IN COUNTRY OF STUDY, TEACHING AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

7. ESTIMATE WAS MADE THAT ONE HUNDRED FELLOWSHIPS SHOULD CONSIST OF FOLLOWING: TWENTY AT MASTERS AND PHD LEVELS; THIRTY TO COMPLETE UNIVERSITY STUDIES ALREADY UNDERWAY; FORTY FOR BEGINNING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS; TEN FOR ADVANCED SPECIALIZED STUDIES OR SPECIAL TRAINING.

8. COMMENT. (A) U.S. PERMDEL WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM SECRETARIAT. FIELDS IDENTIFIED FOR UNIVERSITY AND GRADUATE STUDIES ARE IMPORTANT FROM DEVELOPMENT POINT OF VIEW. CONCEPT WOULD SEEM INTERESTING OF BROADENING PRESENT EXCLUSIVE ARABIC FOCUS OF PALESTINIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND POTENTIAL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT LEADERS TO GIVE THEM CONTACT WITH NON-ARAB SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT.

(B) U.S. PERMDEL UNCERTAIN HOW THIS PROPOSED FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM MIGHT FIT IN WITH OVERALL SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST REGION. HOWEVER, IT WOULD APPEAR TO PERMDEL THAT IDEA SHOULD BE EXPLORED FURTHER. PERMDEL WOULD LIKE TO HAVE FURTHER INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON THIS WITH SECRETARIAT. WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SOUND OUT REACTION OF SELECTED WESTERN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 18598 02 OF 02 240907Z

FRIENDS SUCH AS FRG, UK, FRANCE, SWEDEN, ETC.

(C) IF PROPOSAL WAS FELT TO BE FEASIBLE AND IF U.S. DECIDED IT IN U.S. INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES FOR POSSIBLE U.S. FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION MIGHT BE EXPLORED. ONE MIGHT BE TO DRAW ON AID ADMINISTERED MIDDLE EAST SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FUND EITHER BILATERALLY FOR DEVELOPMENT RELATED PARTICIPANT TRAINING OR INDIRECTLY FOR GRANT TO UNESCO TO ADMINISTER FELLOWSHIP EFFORT. ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE MIGHT BE THROUGH USAID MISSION PARTICIPANT TRAINING GRANTS DIRECTLY TO SELECTED PALESTINIAN STUDENTS UNDER COUNTRY SPONSORSHIP IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS JORDON, SYRIA, LEBANON, ETC. ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE MIGHT BE THROUGH EMBASSY OR CU-SPONSORED TRAINING FOR STUDENTS FROM COUNTRIES SUCH AS JORDON, SYRIA, LEBANON, KUWAIT, ETC.

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